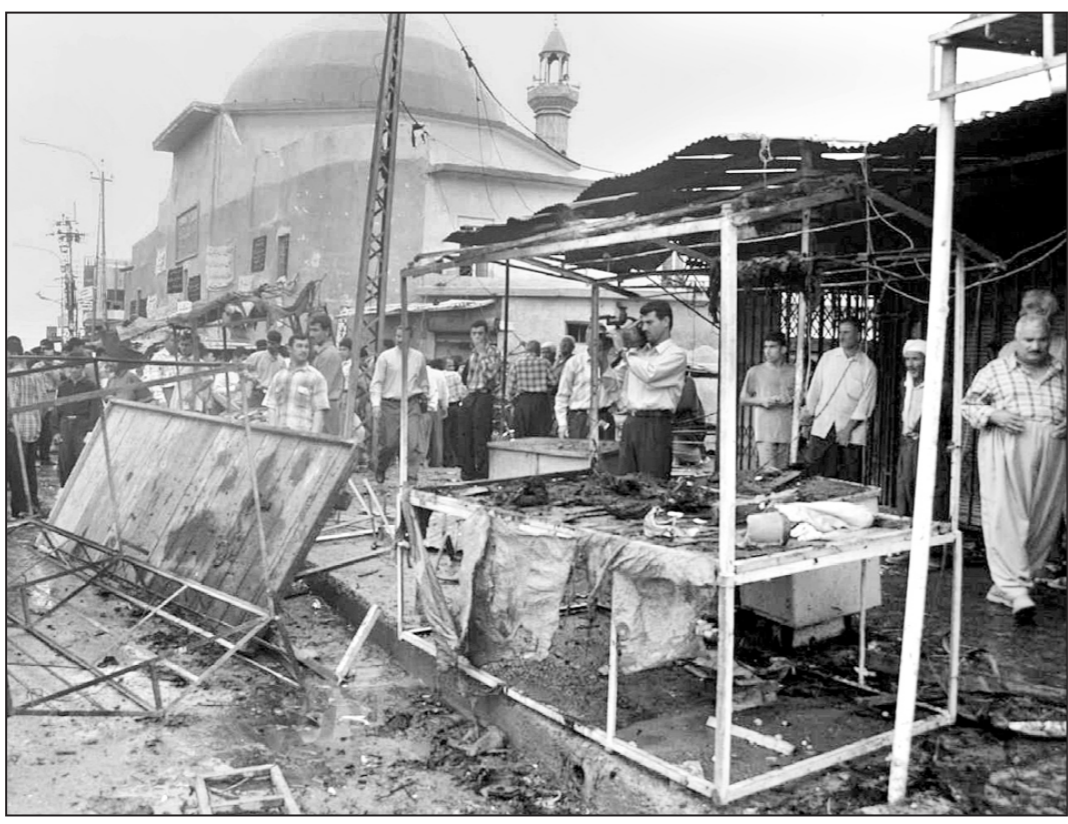


## Pakistan assures India it won't raise bilateral issues at ARF

AFP, Yogyakarta

Pakistan has assured India that it will not raise any bilateral disputes if it is allowed to join a regional security forum, an Indonesian foreign ministry official said yesterday.



Iraqis survey the damage of an explosion in a crowded Kurdish market in the oil-rich city of Kirkuk north of Baghdad yesterday. Four people were killed and 25 wounded in the blast.

## Honduras begins troop withdrawal from Iraq

### 4 killed in Kirkuk blast, Dutch soldier & Russian killed in attack

AFP, Tegucigalpa

Honduras has begun its troop withdrawal from Iraq, as the first of its 369 soldiers arrived in Kuwait, Honduran President, Ricardo Maduro, announced in an interview broadcast early yesterday from Tokyo.

Spanish-led brigade in Najaf, 160 kilometers (100 miles) south of Baghdad. Maduro did not specify how many troops had left Iraq, but said preparations for a full withdrawal were well under way and that all the troops would soon return to Tegucigalpa.

The death was the first to hit the Dutch contingent in Iraq. Another Dutch soldier was wounded in the attack which happened Monday around 1750 GMT on a Samawa bridge.

tense northern oil capital populated by Kurds and Arabs. In another incident one Russian national was killed and two others taken hostage in an attack in Baghdad, RIA Novosti quoted the Russian embassy in Baghdad as saying yesterday.

## Bush's firm support for Rumsfeld may threaten his reelection bid

AFP, Washington

US President George W. Bush's unqualified support for his embattled Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who is facing resignation calls over a widening Iraqi prisoner abuse scandal, may dent the president's reelection bid.

## Bush's job rating dips, support for war down

REUTERS, Washington

President Bush's job approval rating has slipped to a new low and public support for the war in Iraq has declined, according to a poll released on Monday.

## Indian Elections

### Cong terms Andhra results a revolution

#### Results 'unexpected', says BJP

PTI, Hyderabad

Termining its victory march in Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections a silent revolution, Congress leader YS Rajasekhara Reddy has said that the Common man was vexed with TDP misrule.

"This party's government would strive to resolve the issue in co-operation with its ally Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS). On the other hand BJP yesterday termed the Congress-TRS sweep in Andhra Pradesh as 'unexpected' even if it ruled out any review of its ties with the TDP.



Congress Party supporters celebrate a state election win for a party ally with Party president Sonia Gandhi's poster and party flags in front of Congress Party headquarters in New Delhi yesterday. Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Chandrababu Naidu, a key regional ally of India's ruling Hindu nationalist coalition, conceded defeat in state elections in the southern state dealing a blow to Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's efforts to form a government.

## Prison abuse mars US bid to garner support for Iraq

AFP, Washington

The widening scandal of abuse of Iraqi prisoners by US soldiers at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq is denting Washington's bid to gain international support as it prepares to hand sovereignty back to Iraq on June 30.

The photos are "certainly a matter of concern to people, it is a matter people want to talk about," said the official who requested anonymity, adding "it makes it more disruptive ... there is more that has to be dealt with as we move forward."

has the backing of fewer than a third of voters, its worst position for more than 17 years, a British poll showed late Monday. Italy does not hold a permanent seat on the Security Council, but it has troops deployed in Iraq, and the Italian premier was moved Monday to voice his concern over the ongoing fallout from events inside Abu Ghraib.

## UK soldiers killed Iraqi civilians: Amnesty

AFP, London

British soldiers have fired on and killed Iraqi civilians, including an eight-year-old girl, in situations where there was apparently no serious threat and in many cases the British army has not even investigated the incidents, human rights group Amnesty International said in a report published yesterday.

by the British and US forces occupying Iraq, said British soldiers were implicated in the killings of 37 Iraqi civilians since combat operations were officially declared over on May 1, 2003. Amnesty cited the case of eight-year-old Hanan Saleh Matroud, who was fatally shot in the stomach in Karmat Ali on August 21, 2003 while soldiers from Company B of the 1st Battalion of the Kings' Regiment were patrolling the town.

## MAOIST VIOLENCE, EXTORTION Aid agencies to suspend operations in Nepal

AFP, Kathmandu

Foreign development agencies said Monday they would suspend operations in Nepal affecting more than 55,000 poor people because of extortion by Maoist rebels and deteriorating security.

The biggest programme to be suspended is a German and British initiative to bring employment and food security to 30,000 people freed from virtual slavery in 2000 when Nepal outlawed hereditary forced farm labour.

with nor contribute to Maoist organizations," the statement said. United Nations agencies had in March threatened to stop aid operations in Nepal unless the Maoists halted extortion.

## Arroyo, Poe in tight race in Philippines

INQUIRER/ ANN, Manila

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and actor Fernando Poe Jr. were neck and neck in the presidential race as of Monday night, according to partial and unofficial results of a quick count being conducted by a private computer school.

AMA is conducting the quick count for "Eleksyon 2004," the coverage of the local and national elections by GMA-7, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inq7.net, PLDT, Smart, Catholic Media Network, the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, dzBB and New Media Inc.



President George W. Bush (R) and US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld (L) emerge from the Pentagon on Monday after meeting privately with top US military leaders. At an hour long briefing attended by top cabinet officials and Rumsfeld, Bush was shown a representative sample of the hundreds of photographs of abuses of Iraqi prisoners by US soldiers that have not yet been seen by the US public.

## Kerry collects signatures for Rumsfeld's resignation

AFP, Washington

Some 275,000 people have signed a petition launched by Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry calling for US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to resign over the Iraqi prisoner abuse scandal, his campaign director said Monday.

